

CONFIDENTIAL

Dec

Dear Joe:

I have been puzzling about things related to war and peace, and my conclusions are not optimistic.

This may be because I am presuming to survey the world from a vantage point hardly better than that at the bottom of a mineshaft. I have no particular "inside information", and what access I have to classified information scarcely bears on, and certainly is not reflected in, what I will say here.

It seems to me that the principal current thread of U.S. policy might be described thus: We are arming ourselves, and also assisting in arming all other strategically situated nations who will accept our aid, in order to prevent a global war with Russia. Our immediate objectives are to see that Europe comes to possess military power in its own right, thus relieving the burden of costs carried by the U.S., and to see that some favorable sort of settlement is imposed, by threat of force, upon Russia, thus relieving all burdens.

This means that we are in the midst of an armaments race on a very great scale, for the Russians seem to be expending at least an equivalent effort in arming themselves and their friends. Our intent, of course, was not to make this a race, but a "no contest": it is not working out that way.

I do not recall any occasion when a major armaments race did not end in war. Parenthetically, it is often argued that the armaments race breeds the war, on the theory that the burden of armaments becomes intolerable and eventually has to be relieved, as with the bursting of an abscess. I think a better case could be made for the point of view that peoples do not support heavy armaments until political relations have become strained beyond much possibility of mending.

It seems to me that nothing in human relations is inevitable, and I would not accept war between Russia and the U.S. as inevitable. I am afraid, however, that the course we are now following will neither avoid nor long postpone a showdown of force with Russia.

I do not think there is much doubt that, if we could magically find ourselves in a military position obviously much stronger than that of Russia, the Russians would be practical enough to make the best peaceful bargain they could, especially as this would probably be

quite favorable by comparison with any they might similarly have struck with Hitler. We started on our present course because our assumptions permitted us to consider that we might actually attain such a position of power within a reasonably short time, and we had no choice but to strive for the potentially absolute solution. We assumed that we would continue to hold an overwhelming advantage in atomic bombs. We also assumed that Western Europe, with our material aid and faced by a terrible and obvious threat, would speedily achieve again the military strength of which it had previously been capable. Given these assumptions, our policy was logical and commanded internal support. For myself, I watched (from considerably below the salt) the development of this policy, and certainly I felt that it offered our best hope.

The situation now seems different to me because I consider that both fundamental assumptions are at this stage dubious indeed.

As to the atomic position, we are officially and frequently informed that our atomic arsenal is pretty much all that we might desire. But, unfortunately, judging again from public pronouncements on the subject, the Russians seem to have strengthened theirs more rapidly than we had anticipated. I think it a truism that 1,000 atom bombs in our hands gives us less than ten-fold advantage over an enemy possessing 100. This is especially the case when we deal, as we would, with an enemy government having less regard than our own for the destruction of civilian nationals. Also, we can scarcely discount the weakness to our own side which results from the pitiable vulnerability of London, not to speak of Paris; this weakness is at least as much political as it is military.

As to our second basic assumption, I have come to believe that Europe cannot revive great military strength, certainly not in the short-term, and perhaps not in our time. I believe this to be a fact, although it is one for which I can offer little proof. A few points do seem indicative.

I do not see that there has been an increase in European strength, thus far, which is consistent either with the urgency of the situation assumed or with the pressure which American promises of aid could be expected to induce. Straus-Hupe suggested in a recent Saturday Evening Post editorial that our military position is now such that we could dictate an eminently satisfactory settlement of German and Japanese problems. This simply does not seem to me to be the case. I think we have great strength, but that it is not so expressed as to permit such a gambit. General Eisenhower is quoted by the Associated Press as having informed NATO delegates, in Paris on December 15th, that they must get ahead with defense efforts, and the

necessity for him to do so certainly indicates that NATO preparedness progress is unsatisfactory. He is represented as having made other significant statements at the same time. In response to a question as to whether the planned big build-up of forces would still apply even if some countries failed to meet their rearmament targets, he said yes, and added, "Just as there are no absolutes in war, there are no absolutes in military planning". He is quoted, too, as having angrily attacked "sophisticated and cynical criticism" of efforts to create a European Army. I will refer to these two statements later.

Again, the word has widely leaked that, in American official thinking, Europe cannot be defended on the ground except with a powerful contribution of German manpower. I would be inclined to accept this diktat, especially if any part of Germany itself is to be included in the defense. At the same time, I do not really believe that any formula can be found which will soon permit a significant German military contribution to the defense of Western Europe. The idea of a European Army -- good enough and early enough -- appears to me to be unworkable, despite the fact that a great many serious Europeans are arriving at ostensibly serious agreements in this connection. West Germany surely cannot be conceded full partnership in such an enterprise, and surely West Germany cannot contribute significant forces except as a full partner: this would be a political impossibility. Moreover, the West Germans will balk in the end at a step which guarantees, in a war most of them feel must occur, that Germany will be at once an international battleground and the scene of pitched German factional war. I think that no more can soon be had of a European Army than patchy and unreliable forces in which German elements would be of mercenary type, and other elements would be national rather than European. Esprit and authority, and hence effectiveness, will be unattainable.

If what I have written above is sophisticated, it is not intended to be cynical.

One can well understand General Eisenhower's support for the European Army concept. He is the great leader of a cause which, as defined, requires this concept. Also, the essential rightness of the idea forces his support, and may even lead him to consider that it is also a practicable one. He is doing in this respect what Messrs. Churchill and Spaak do in urging European Union. These notable men see alternatives with an awful clarity, and they know that there is no other way in which Europe can regain stature, or even play an essential part in its own salvation. It is a tremendous presumption on my part to question the immediate feasibility of ideas which possess this kind of public support. I do so because I am profoundly convinced

that the weight of history and institutions lies so heavy on the old, established nations of Europe that they cannot quickly adopt radically new patterns. It would be far easier to achieve European union within a larger union which included the English speaking peoples. After all, Europe at present can coordinate a military coalition only under an American general. The question of a wider union is another subject, and one with a good deal of interest, but I will only say about its early possibility that Churchill, who is most responsible for present efforts at European Union, cannot wholeheartedly permit England to join these efforts any more than those for the European Army. Unions of all kinds I regard as goals full of hope, for which we must strive, but not as goals to be reached easily or soon.

If what I have said above were not enough, it seems to me that Europe's lethargy and fatalism could be cited as additional support. The French, for example, have not really faced up yet to the consequences of having accepted a major role in the NATO structure. They will have to support a visitation of American forces which as yet has hardly begun. They will have to contribute resources which as yet they have not found. They will have to support American air bases upon the soil of France, knowing that the Russians will fear such bases, and knowing their own vulnerability during at least a drawn-out transitional stage of build-up. They will listen to American criticism, if and when their effort falters, and they will have to accept this criticism, along with dollars for military purposes, from a nation which is also allied with Franco Spain. It would be possible to raise similar specters in respect to the strains on other European allies, including the British.

I think that our military coalition is at least as subject as other such coalitions to internal stresses. It may be more so than most, and one of the greatest dangers we may face, I believe, is in failing to recognize an existing situation of disunity until it has become too late to mend. In other words, we might well come to a stage in which all concerned were officially supporting a joint endeavor which actually was being pursued only desultorily. It is a military axiom that any decision, carried out fully and forcefully, is better than no decision at all. Whether our current course is the best one to follow, it seems to me that we should pursue it completely and all the way, or else consciously adopt another course of action. I think we might fall into the fatal error of unconsciously abandoning our present course of action, because its objectives exceed capabilities, while failing to settle upon another.

What I have offered so far seems to be an opinion that the present effort to develop preponderant force, which will defeat Russia

without being employed, is probably sterile. If this is correct, what might be done about it?

I could propose, at this point, concentration upon a vast expansion of U.S. national military forces, and my judgment or my narrow military mind might be impugned in some quarters, but my loyalty and patriotism would go unquestioned.

I think that the approach we might take is somewhat the reverse. There is little doubt in my mind that the Russians -- and I mean the Russian leadership -- have a genuine fear of our intentions. I talked the other day with a friend who has just completed two years in Moscow. He tells me that the Russian people are supplied liberally with facts, quite aside from the propaganda of hate which comments upon facts. True, these are selected facts -- selected to prove that Russia is menaced. The point here is that we are supplying facts which do apparently prove, to Russian satisfaction, our inexorable intent to destroy what we regard as a Russian menace, but what they regard as Russia.

Now, I do not believe that there is any remote possibility that we might formally agree with the Russians on any moderation of the current armaments race. It seems to me that there is no greater political delusion than the recurrent obsession with regulation of armaments. No one was ever more correct than the envoy (was it Litvinov?) who said, a generation past at Geneva, that the Soviet Union was perfectly safe in proposing disarmament because the capitalist states could not really accept disarmament. He stated, like most communists, only half the truth, because it was and is equally true that the Soviet Union could not really accept disarmament. Of course, treaties may, in favorable circumstances, be signed, but they will not deal with significant factors and they will, in the end, be ignored. If Aesop were to produce a fable on this subject, it would be this: Two stags confronted each other across a pond in the mating season and agreed that combat was ridiculous. Each would, that night, retire to his own woods and remove his antlers. In the morning the two met, only to discover that each had cut off one lower point in his antlers, and had burnished the others to needle sharpness.

Joe, you and I may one day again have to do with regulation of armaments, and it will be very interesting, but it will also be a futile exercise.

I think armaments regulate themselves. If the nations were perfectly tranquil, it would be easy to obtain some sort of agreement

on disarmament, but it would be unnecessary and not worth the effort. It seems to me that a situation now has to be induced in which the armaments race could, to some extent, abate itself. This cannot be done in agreement with the Russians. It can only be done by ourselves in agreement with our allies.

I suggest, therefore, that we should see what can be done to moderate preparations for war on our own side. This is a project fraught with hazards. It may not even be practical, for perhaps the Juggernaut is beyond control. Again, it may not be within the bounds of political possibility to reverse, even partially, present policies respecting preparations for war. But the very favorable factors do exist that these preparations call for a diversion of resources which may be beyond Europe's capabilities, and which is certainly beyond Europe's desires, and which also imposes a terrific strain upon the American economy. It is not difficult, normally, to support a decrease in public expenditures. I do not think it would be impossible, if an intelligent case were made, to persuade our allies as to the advisability of a slower and smaller build-up of military strength in Europe, assuming we reiterated the assurance that the United States would also have to be defeated in the event of aggression against them. They would not thus be assured that they would never be subject to military occupation, but if my thesis has any validity there can be little real assurance to the contrary in any case. Their best assurance would remain, as it always has, in measures taken to reduce the likelihood that they would be attacked in the first place.

There would, accordingly, be a grave calculation involved in the course I suggest, and I can explain it best perhaps after quoting from a recent publication of U.S. Air Force doctrine as follows:

"The decisive nature of modern weapons may prevent a build-up phase during modern war. Build-up may have to take place before hostilities begin. A force in-being thus assumes great importance. A nation which is unable to start full-scale military operations instantly may well be defeated at the first onslaught, particularly if the enemy has the initiative in time and place....."

This I take to be a statement of obvious truth.

The Russian leadership could certainly, as we could probably not, seize the initiative any time any place. It could employ modern weapons at the first onslaught, and it could also employ methods of military antiquity with great effectiveness on the Eurasian continent.

But we have to assume -- and if this assumption is untenable, then there is no merit in what I propose -- that the Russian leadership does not desire open war except on its own terms, that these terms do not involve the choice of conflict with a powerful United States, and that the Russian leadership will seek to avoid another kind of major war so long as its regime does not otherwise appear doomed by a fruition of hostile preparations. The Soviet Communist hierarchy after all has a great stake in Russia as a going concern, whether for reasons of Russian imperialism or the cause of world communism, and quite without any regard to a continuation of Byzantine Christian civilization.

We on our part must wish to avoid a war which could very possibly extinguish both branches of Christian civilization. There are eventualities we would consider worse, of course, although surely not many. One of these would be that we had invited our own destruction through our efforts not to give offense; in other words, that we had unilaterally disarmed to the point of inviting sudden and successful Russian attack. Whatever we did in moderating our part in an armaments race, otherwise likely to end in a dead heat, it could not go so far or so fast as to suggest that Russia might engage in open aggression with prospects of a victory the Kremlin regime could survive to exploit.

Such a victory would have to be one in which the United States itself was rendered impotent. Successors for aggression elsewhere could never otherwise be consolidated, for the United States would remain to be reckoned with and would, moreover, insist upon the reckoning. Whatever else we do, if I may diverge for a moment, we must continue by all means to impress Russia's rulers with this plain fact, which Frank Tannenbaum so well states in the current Foreign Affairs. We will not, in the end, buy peace with Russia at the expense of other nations, and this must be known to all.

So the calculation involved in the course I suggest is a calculation of the war preparations we must undertake or continue, and those which we might abate. This is a very difficult calculation indeed, and like all such calculations it can be arrived at only intuitively, and by compromise and negotiation, for "calculated risks" are never really calculated. There are, in the wise words of General Eisenhower, no absolutes in military planning.

My own calculation would have to be based on an acceptance of the beliefs expressed above, and might, as a preliminary estimate, run something like this: First, our NATO allies would be more than pleased were we to relax our insistence upon their rapid fabrication

of indigenous military forces, even at the cost of a good bit less military aid from the United States. I suspect they cannot, or will not, fabricate such forces to the point of genuine effectiveness, in any case, and hence suspect that we will be wasting our substance in giving them more than moderate aid, and also that our disappointment and their frustration as to the results must strain NATO relationships to the breaking point. We would do better to foresee this and to give them and ourselves a graceful escape to a tenable military alliance and relationship. The NATO effort in Europe, ours and theirs, might be about halved, or at least reduced to the point where it could and would be accomplished. This would demand a new estimate of the situation, which lessens the threat and moves it farther away in time, and I sincerely believe that such an estimate would be justified in light of the course we would be adopting.

Second, I would reduce our own national build-up appreciably, but not sharply and not at heaviest cost to our long-range striking capabilities. If we are building forces which will require annual maintenance expenditures, with the completion of build-up, of, say, \$40 billion per year, I would reduce the program to accommodate a maintenance rate of, say, \$30 billion. I do not know the figures, and these are merely illustrative. Any cuts would strike first at immediate combat capabilities, because of heavy fixed costs for our military establishment.

Finally, I would greatly curtail the showing of American long-range striking forces around the Russian periphery. I would cease the stationing of atomic carriers, actual or potential, at bases in England or Japan or elsewhere on foreign soil, and also the maneuvering of aircraft carriers in waters close to Russian soil. The bases I would keep. I would build no new ones on foreign soil.

This would leave us a strength in Europe expressed largely by ground divisions and fighter aircraft, insufficient to offer any possibility of threat to Russia, and the strength of which should be readjusted in accordance with changes introduced in new NATO agreements and in the developing situation.

For the rest, I would continue a firm support for Greece, Turkey and Yugoslavia, without asking for bases in any of these countries and without suggesting they might rely on our atomic support. I would extend to West Germany assurances equivalent to those extended France, or Japan. I would withdraw from military relations with Spain, which in any event has no place to turn except towards the West, because reduced preparations in NATO Europe would otherwise be unacceptable. I would avoid any extension of the Korean war,

difficult as this may prove in the event an armistice proves temporary. I would considerably curtail our part in the billingsgate which seems to be most of what remains of the battle for men's minds. If there are any minds which can be reached and which are not now pretty well set, they are in India, and deeds should prove more persuasive than words with the Indians. In fact, a kind of Christian forbearance could prove extremely effective everywhere, although not always because it was thus interpreted.

I think that this course would certainly accomplish two desirable results, and might accomplish a third. It would better assure the continuing solidarity of the Western world. It would, better than by continuing the full present emphasis on armaments at home and in Europe, preserve that real Western strength which lies in balanced and healthy economies. It might abate the ever-increasing tension which I feel sure can otherwise have no happy end. If it did, we should have the time, in an improved political atmosphere, to make the many slow and painful adjustments through which peace may again, and satisfactorily, be achieved.

Despite the assurance with which I seem to have set forth a number of generalizations and broad suggestions, I am -- Heaven knows! -- anything but certain of what we should do. There are other alternatives which might be examined, and, if I am certain of anything, it is that we should now re-examine the situation and its possibilities.

In the meantime, until we consciously adopt a new course of action, let me repeat the imperative, that we pursue the policies we now possess, completely and without hesitation, because nothing could be more fatal to our deepest interests than drift and vacillation.

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REMARKS:

The comments by
various members of PY/O.P.C.
appear not only to be very
definite, but unanimous.

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